

P.G.B.

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E.M.

State of December 1962 Questionnaire on NIS

1. Twenty-one Embassy replies to the above-cited questionnaire have been received. I do not know how many questionnaires were sent out. The twenty-one replies on hand, however, constitute a fair sampling of the field, since they represent all regions of the world (five each from the Soviet Bloc, Middle East -- South Asia, and Latin America, four from Western Europe, and two from the Far East) substantially covered by the NIS.

2. Insofar as the general attitude toward the NIS can be deduced from the replies, this attitude, as is to be expected, varies. Some Embassies appear to regard the NIS with something approaching enthusiasm (e.g., Prague, Warsaw, Tel Aviv, Rangoon, and Tokyo). A few seem, at best, lukewarm (e.g., Tunis and Helsinki). The feelings of the majority apparently range somewhere between these two extremes. The most frequent criticism is that some Sections which could be most useful are out-of-date. One Embassy (Stockholm) which reports minimal use of the NIS for this reason adds this interesting postscript to its reply: "---the Embassy wishes to point out that the review undertaken in connection with the instruction has been helpful in bringing to the attention of the Embassy's officers the wealth of material available in the NIS and has stimulated a new awareness of its value to the Embassy. Procedures are being developed to insure that all officers with reporting responsibilities read the sociological sections of the NIS in addition to the sections of primary interest to them."

3. Because of the bulk of the detailed collation of the replies, I have not had it typed. I can produce it, untyped, at any time or, if desired, can have it typed. The following is a summary of it:

a. (Extent of use - special uses)

1) The main uses of the NIS reported most nearly unanimously are for orientation and briefing and as a work for background and reference.

2) The following special uses are reported:

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of the status of military bases in Albania within the context of Soviet-Albanian military co-operation (Belgrade); consular use in determining eligibility of visa applicants and USIS use for long-range planning (Tokyo); use by reporting officers to determine long-range trends and as guidance for Embassy collection to fill gaps in information (Prague, Warsaw, Rangoon, Santiago); Embassy makes its copies of NIS available to consular posts (Bonn).

3) Six Embassies report that NIS Sections dealing with the more static topics (e.g., geography, transportation, characteristics of the people, structure of government) remain essentially valid for a considerable period of time, despite their age, while Sections dealing with more fleeting topics (e.g., those involving extensive political and economic data) rapidly become outdated.

4) Seven Embassies report the NIS to be of minimal use: mainly other sources provide more up-to-date information (Helsinki, Stockholm, Amman); NIS used almost exclusively by the Army Attaché (Tunis); no specific reason given (Guatemala City); because of the abundance of other published material on France (Paris); because of the present very fluid situation in Brazil (Rio de Janeiro).

5) Six Embassies report the NIS to be particularly useful to the Service Attachés.

b. (Usefulness of the NIS in a critical situation)

Eleven Embassies think that the NIS would be useful in the event of a critical situation, five do not, and five beg the question.

c. (Amount of detail in the NIS and use of summary passages)

Fifteen Embassies think that the NIS has adequate detail, one that it has too much detail, and two that it has too little detail; three give unclear answers or do not answer the question concerning detail at all. Eight Embassies consider the summary passages useful, four do not, and nine did not answer the question about summary passages.

d. (Potential value of Sociological, Political, and Economic Sections as compared with that of other Sections)

Twelve Embassies consider that the Sociological, Political, and Economic Sections are more valuable than the others, four that they are less valuable, and two that the difference in value

among Sections is insignificant. Two Embassies do not answer the question, and one begs it.

e. (Value of Chapter I as compared with that of Chapters II-IX)

Many of the answers to this question are not clearcut. Embassies that have seen Chapter I recognize, with practical unanimity, its value as a briefing instrument. Ten Embassies believe that the other Chapters are generally more valuable than Chapter I, and five that Chapter I is more valuable than the other Chapters, mainly because the former is more up-to-date. Four Embassies (including Paris!) have not seen Chapter I, and two beg the question. Four Embassies think that Chapters I on surrounding countries would be particularly valuable.

f. (Advantages of the co-ordinated, interdepartmental NIS Program in providing basic intelligence to U.S. missions abroad that individual departmental production would not provide.)

Seventeen Embassies believe that the co-ordinated, interdepartmental NIS Program has definite advantages over any individual department production in providing basic intelligence to the field. One Embassy (Caracas) believes that the co-ordinated, interdepartmental program has two disadvantages: 1) it makes the output itself full of both extraneous materials and excessive generalizations insofar as the specific end user is concerned and 2) it increases the already unfortunately long time lag between collection of source material and distribution of the finished Survey. One Embassy (Helsinki) considers itself unqualified to express an opinion, and two Embassies (Paris and Copenhagen) beg the question.

4. State sent out a similar questionnaire in 1953, which I analyzed in 1954, and another in 1957 or 1958, which I did not analyze. The 1953 replies, made at a time when fewer NIS Sections were available to those canvassed than in 1962, were substantially the same as the 1962 replies regarding such matters as the use of which the NIS is being put, the value of the NIS in emergency situations, and the scope and format of the NIS. In view of this fact, I do not see any useful purpose that would be served by sending further NIS questionnaires to posts of the Foreign Service.

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